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## STUDY PROJECT

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SHOULD WOMEN BE IN THE FIELD ARTILLERY?

BY

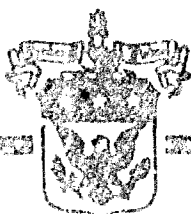
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career progression and equal opportunity which they are due.

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

SHOULD WOMEN BE IN THE FIELD ARTILLERY?

An Individual Study Project

by

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U.S. Army War College  
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30 March 1990

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# ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: James E. Nyberg, LTC, FA

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The women of Field Artillery branch today have no hopes of reasonable career progression or to compete equally with their male counterparts. In examining this dilemma, I will address the background and Army policy that has led to this lack of opportunity. Additionally, I will examine the Field Artillery environment today and the prospects for the future. This paper supports the expansion of female career opportunities and will prove that change is needed and that change is supported by precedent. I will prove that women's role in the Field Artillery must be increased to allow the career progression and equal opportunity which they are due.

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## INTRODUCTION

Should women be in the Field Artillery? That question was first asked in 1977 and is being asked today. Army force structure decisions are removing Field Artillery systems from the structure. Replacement systems do not provide for the inclusion of women. Combat exclusion and risk analysis are political issues that remain unresolved. These decisions and issues serve to clearly reduce career opportunities for women in the Field Artillery. Do we owe women more than they have today? Do we close Field Artillery to women and allow them to serve in other career fields that provide better opportunities? This study will address these questions.

## BACKGROUND

Women have served proudly and with distinction in the armed forces throughout history. This exemplary service has led to both a growth in the number of women and to a proliferation in the number and types of assignments that they hold. In 1940, women represented 3 percent of the active force, while today they represent approximately 10 per cent. While the growth and opportunities for women rapidly expanded, the rapidity of such growth occurred without adequate planning and analysis. Where women could serve on the battlefields of tomorrow is but one

example of the lack of planning and foresight of the Army's leadership. This one issue has led to countless reviews, studies and task forces examining where women could serve in battle.

The women in Field Artillery were directly impacted by the battlefield positioning issue when in 1977, the Secretary of the Army issued the following combat exclusion policy:

Women may not serve in Infantry, Armor, Cannon Field Artillery, Combat Engineer or low altitude Air Defense Artillery units of battalion/squadron or smaller size.<sup>1</sup>

This policy served to limit career opportunities for women to only missile, target acquisition or headquarters type duties. Lance and Pershing missile systems remained open in their entirety, as did radar and sound/flash positions in the target acquisition units.

As concerns for women in the Army grew commensurate with their population, a Women in the Army Policy Review Group was formed in 1982 at the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Army. Their charter was to:

assess how current Army policies concerning women or which affect women impact on the Army's mission and readiness, to include mobility and deployment. Further, the Policy Review Group should assess how these policies affect the retention of female soldiers and quality of life aspects.<sup>2</sup>

The Policy Review Group, as one of its tasks, reviewed the 1978 combat exclusion policy and developed a direct combat probability code (DCPC) system for personnel distribution on the battlefield. DCPC will be examined in detail in Chapter 2, but the result was to further limit female opportunities by closing Lance missile firing batteries because of their proposed battlefield location.



In 1986, TRADOC commissioned a task force to examine Women in Combat and was given the mission, "to relook how the Army should assign and utilize women on the Airland battlefield."<sup>3</sup> The result of the relook that directly affected Field Artillery was their recommendation to reopen Lance firing batteries (previously closed under DCPC) to women. That recommendation, combined with the fact that Pershing units (still open to women) perform essentially the same mission as Lance units, led the Commandant of the Field Artillery School to request that Lance firing batteries and corps MLRS units be opened in their entirety to women. The rationale provided to the CG, TRADOC concluded that:

For us to continue to offer our women a credible, complete and fulfilling career in the Field Artillery, we would like to pursue this strategy and need your support.<sup>4</sup>

The CG, TRADOC did not support his request:

I have reviewed the background concerning assignment limitations of female soldiers in entire MLRS units and Lance firing batteries. I feel they should remain closed to females.<sup>5</sup>

The signing of the INF agreement and the subsequent loss of the Pershing II system again prompted the Commandant of the Field Artillery School to request opening of Lance firing batteries and MLRS units at Corps level in an effort to offset the loss of Pershing II assignment opportunities to women.

The TRADOC staff, after examining the proposal, made the following recommendation to the CG, TRADOC that resulted in a

nondecision:

Given the INF treaty, current combat exclusion policy and career progression projections; deny USAFAS (United States Army Field Artillery School) request, curtail accessions; allow officers to voluntarily branch detail in Field Artillery and consider closing Field Artillery to women by 1992.<sup>6</sup>

In 1988, the Secretary of Defense established the Department of Defense (DOD) Task Force on Women in the Military in still another effort to address the full integration of women in the armed forces. Precipitated by the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) continuing concerns for women's issues and problems as a result of recently completed trips and interviews, the task force reviewed combat exclusion again with the mission:

to evaluate the impact of consistency in application of exclusion statutes and policies rather than questioning the combat exclusion itself.<sup>7</sup>

The task force evaluation resulted in:

Further explicit guidance about how combat missions should be defined and to specify the way in which risk can be considered when assessing noncombat units and positions for closure to women.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the Department of Defense "Risk Rule" was created and defined as:

Risk of direct combat, exposure to hostile fire/capture are proper criteria for closing positions to women. If the type, degree, and, to a lesser extent, duration of risk are equal to or greater than direct combat units (Infantry/Armor), then units or positions may be closed to women.<sup>9</sup>

When applied to Field Artillery units, the risk rule reaffirmed the closure of Lance firing batteries. Based upon that

reaffirmation, the loss of the Pershing II system and the force structure decision to compress Lance battalions to half their current number, the CG, USAFAS recommended in June 1988, that Field Artillery be closed to women due to the elimination of reasonable career progression opportunities.

The Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) was briefed in September 1988 on closure of the branch to women and agreed in concept, although he deferred his final decision pending the receipt of a detailed transition plan, to facilitate the phase-out of women. In March 1989, the CSA was again briefed on the closure and the transition plan and he again deferred his decision. The basis for his deferral was the uncertainty of the system that was to be the follow on to the Lance (FOTL) and its applicability to women. CSA directed CG, USAFAS to layout the FOTL details so that a decision regarding the future of women in the Field Artillery could be made.<sup>10</sup>

It never was. The FOTL and closure briefing to the CSA was cancelled when, after DACOWITS surveyed the field and found women actively seeking a Field Artillery career, recommended to the Secretary of the Army that he open Lance firing batteries and Corps MLRS units. DACOWITS believed that the Army should continue to lead the services in equal opportunity; not show a reversal in the trend by closure.<sup>11</sup> Influenced by the DACOWITS concern for the branch closure, the CSA and DCSPER agreed to again defer the final decision and to adopt the status quo as a

position.<sup>12</sup> That position would:

allow women to continue to serve in Field Artillery while assessing them at a reduced level and providing no expanded career opportunities.<sup>13</sup>

Not satisfied, DACOWITS requested that the Secretary of the Army intervene to force an Army decision on the future of women in the Field Artillery. The Secretary then directed resolution of the issue by December 31, 1989.<sup>14</sup>

Today there is still no resolution and the controversy remains. The loss of Field Artillery systems and the projected elimination of the Lance missile system by the mid 90's, combined with the uncertainty of its follow-on system leave the women in limbo. The opportunities that exist today lie mainly in the TDA army--not viable positioning for career development and progression when compared to the full range of TOE/TDA positions available to their male counterparts.

Why has the Army come so far and yet cannot provide full opportunities to all? An examination of the restrictions imposed upon the system may reveal the answer.

#### ENDNOTES

1. DA, DCSPER, Women in the Army Policy Review, p.7.
2. Ibid., p. A-1.
3. TRADOC, Task Force on Women in Combat, p. v-1.
4. Message, CG, USAFAS to CG, TRADOC.
5. Message, CG, TRADOC to CG, USAFAS.
6. TRADOC Briefing Slide to CG TRADOC, Dec 87.
7. DOD Report, Task Force on Women in the Military, p.8.
8. Ibid., p.10.
9. Ibid., p.10.
10. DA, DCSPER, Briefing to CSA, Mar 89.
11. SecArmy Memo, SecArmy meeting with DACOWITS Chairman, Nov 89.
12. ASA, M&RA Memo, Women in Field Artillery, Nov 89.
13. Message, DCSPER to Army, Dec 86.
14. SecArmy Memo, SecArmy meeting with DACOWITS Chairman, Feb 90.

## Direct Combat Probability Code

The major impediment to female Field Artillery career progression is the lack of the number and type of duty positions available to them. While their male counterparts can serve in any position in the Field Artillery for which they are qualified, females are restricted by policies that classify each job in the Army according to the probability of participating in direct combat.

The Women in the Army Policy Review Group formed in May 1981 and prompted by a 1976 General Accounting Office (GAO) recommendation that the Army review policies allowing women to serve in positions that would require routine engagement in direct combat, conducted a comprehensive review of combat exclusion policies for women.<sup>1</sup>

The Policy Review Group (PRG) found that Title 10 of the United States Code specifically prohibited U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy females from aircraft or ships engaged or expected to be engaged in combat missions. The Army, however, was not included in the Title 10 provisions and was left to determine Army policy for females. Using his statutory authority provided under Title 10, the Secretary of the Army issued the previously discussed Combat Exclusion Policy in 1977. This policy is the genesis of the restrictive assignment policies of today.

Addressing the GAO concern of direct combat, the Policy Review Group found that the Army had defined it as:

Engaging an enemy with individual or crew served weapons while being exposed to direct enemy fire, a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy's personnel and a substantial risk of capture. Direct combat takes place while closing with the enemy by fire, maneuver and shock effect to destroy or capture him or while repelling his assault by fire, close combat or counterattack.<sup>2</sup>

Armed with this definition of direct combat, the Policy Review Group developed a combat probability coding system to prevent future occurrences of female malassignments and to provide a definitive means for personnel distribution on the battlefield.

The direct combat probability code (DCPC) system required a detailed analysis of every position in the active Army, National Guard and Army Reserve. The Policy Review Group determined that the following four variables best portrayed the relative risks of a female in any given position routinely engaging in direct combat:

- 1) Duties/tasks required by MOS
- 2) Unit mission and employment
- 3) Battlefield location
- 4) Tactical doctrine<sup>3</sup>

Given the four variables and a coding system of each job from P1 to P7 (P1 representing high combat probability and P7 no combat probability), doctrinal proponents were tasked to apply the variables to each paragraph and line number of every TOE and TDA in the Total Army and then to assign a "P" code to them. The proponents then, by their application and coding of positions, determined which positions were to be closed to females. The

coding by all proponents resulted in 23 additional MOS being closed to women because of their battlefield location (forward area) or because their MOS duties required direct combat tasks. The Field Artillery lost four MOS as a result of DCPC. That loss, combined with the 1977 combat exclusion policy, left only Headquarters Batteries of Lance battalions and all of Pershing units open to women. Additionally, various TDA positions were also available.

DCPC was approved by the Secretary of the Army in 1983 and serves today to restrict women from assignments with high combat probability. However, with every policy approval, comes an exception. In November 1986, the Secretary of the Army approved the opening of the Forward Support Battalion (FSB) as an exception to DCPC and called it a fine-tuning adjustment to the current DCPC policy.<sup>4</sup> Previously closed under DCPC because of its habitual location forward of the brigade rear boundary, the FSB had been forced to operate without female soldiers previously allowed in the precursor Forward Area Support Team (FAST). The Secretary of the Army felt that an exception was warranted:

to respond to concerns expressed by support commanders and allows them the needed flexibility in soldier utilization and replacement. It restores the interchangeability of positions requiring the same duties in the FSB as in the FAST.<sup>5</sup>

That exception, I suggest, has set the stage for further exceptions and ultimately to what could be the demise of DCPC. While DCPC has served its purpose well, its derivation was from battlefield location questions that may not be relevant in the



future. Using location as one of the four variables utilized in the coding process was predicated on a typical Western European scenario. Combat divisions on line with easily distinguishable brigade boundaries defined the highest likelihood of direct combat, i.e., forward of the brigade rear boundary. That scenario, conflict in Europe, has been altered drastically in recent months with Soviet and Eastern European countries undergoing dramatic social, political and military restructuring. The probability of conflict has likewise changed. Reduced military manning levels and extensive talk of defensive postures among the Warsaw Pact nations has led the United States to a "peace is breaking out all over" predilection.

However, all is not rosy. Regional conflicts, undefined, unstructured and lacking the stereotypical European form are on the rise. How might one define the brigade rear boundary in the jungles of Panama or Columbia? A return to the Viet Nam style conflict appears inevitable and the applicability of DCPC in such an environment is questionable. The Multiple Launch Rocket System is not unlike the FSB. Deployed well forward, doctrinally MLRS is transitory throughout the battlefield. Not as likely to engage in direct combat as are Infantrymen or Armor soldiers, the MLRS crew, now restricted to male only, could easily qualify as another exception to DCPC. For that matter, so could some Signal, Aviation and Air Defense MOS. The question is where do we draw the line on exceptions and begin to redefine DCPC or at least how we expect to utilize women in the future?

The world has changed dramatically in the last six months,

much faster than expected. The Army must change too. But to change the Army requires the change of a political mindset. The will of the American people, expressed through Congress is a beginning. The Secretary of Defense recognized the political realities of the issue when he told the DOD Task Force on Women in the Military:

The law regarding combat exclusion reflects a fundamental social issue more properly addressed by the Congress.<sup>6</sup>

However, the issue of women in combat is so sensitive that even the most adamant reformists are reluctant to seek Congressional change. The dichotomy of combat exclusion and female opportunities was best expressed by Representative Pat Schroeder:

Everyone knows it's a joke, but I don't think anyone here feels that they could stand up and say 'I voted against the combat exclusion'...It's not something we all like to talk about in a debate and deal with.<sup>7</sup>

The future of the Field Artillery rests upon needed Congressional change. Providing more opportunities for women in Field Artillery means opening more systems. That will not happen without change.

#### ENDNOTES

1. DA, DCSPER, Women in the Army Policy Review, p.3.
2. Ibid., p.7.
3. Ibid., p.4-8.
4. Message, DCSPER to Army, Dec 86.
5. Ibid.
6. DOD Report, Task Force on Women in the Military, p.8.
7. Washington Post, 24 Sep 89, p.A16.

## FIELD ARTILLERY WOMEN TODAY

There are currently 363 TOE positions open to Field Artillery female officers and 2,626 positions open to male enlisted women. As the Pershing II system phases out of the inventory (90-92), 261 officer and 1,976 enlisted positions will be eliminated. From 1990 to 1993, as the number of Lance battalions is compressed from eight to four, 36 officer and 308 enlisted positions will be lost. Finally, as the Lance system outlives its usefulness and is retired from the force structure, 20 officer and 12 enlisted positions will retire with it. The Army's force structure decisions will have effectively removed, by 1995, all but 26 officer and 330 enlisted TOE positions open to women.<sup>1</sup>

The positions remaining to women are either in warhead detachments throughout the world, or in TDA organizations. Current career progression requirements for branch qualification dictate that tactical unit (TOE) experience is essential for leadership development. There appears to be a disconnect between what must be and what can be.

The active duty strength of Field Artillery females represents less than one per cent of the total active strength. Numbering 133 officers and 214 enlisted, the total of 347 women have little to look forward to unless something is done.

What must be done is to open more systems to women.

However, the decision to open the branch must be based upon some decision principles that display consistency, can withstand scrutiny and provide the needed opportunity. Consistency with existing DCPC and risk rule guidelines is essential in gaining acceptance of the proposal. If granted as an exception to DCPC or the risk rule, it must be a well thought out and reasoned exception, such as that made for the Forward Support Battalion (FSB). The decision must also withstand the close scrutiny of Congress, DACOWITS and the other services to ensure that it is based upon factual information and does not allow the perception of bias or prejudice for or against women. Additionally, for the women themselves, it must provide for equal opportunity. It must show fairness and equity among the branch, male and female, while allowing all soldiers to reach their full potential.

What systems should be opened to women? Lance firing batteries, Corps MLRS units and the Follow on to Lance (FOTL) units are but a beginning.

Lance firing batteries are currently closed to women while the Headquarters and Service Batteries remain open. The Lance mission is:

to destroy, neutralize or suppress the enemy by providing conventional and/or nuclear field artillery missile fires in support of corps forces.<sup>2</sup>

The mission does not involve direct combat nor the collocation with direct combat units. Their presence forward of the brigade rear boundary is transitory, with the headquarters doctrinally located behind the brigade rear boundary.

Despite closure of the firing batteries to women, commanders

in Europe and at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma have assigned women to key Lance positions and they have performed superbly. Twenty-six females have commanded firing batteries while countless enlisted women have served at their side. Commanders in the field realized quickly what the Army has not--women can and do serve well in P1 coded positions.

The recognition of reality for the women in Lance, the formal opening of the firing batteries to them, would add 168 officer and 940 enlisted TOE positions to the structure. Additionally, 32 Captain and 8 Lieutenant Colonel level command opportunities would be available.<sup>3</sup> MLRS has essentially the same mission as does the Lance and is closed completely to women. Again, it does not have a direct combat role nor does it collocate with a direct combat unit. Transitory throughout the battlefield, MLRS uses shoot and move tactics, as does Lance, to enhance its survivability. MLRS, having the same mission, tactics, and battlefield location as Lance, should be opened. Opening MLRS to women would add back nearly 2000 TOE positions and afford women 20 Captain and 5 Lieutenant Colonel command opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

FOTL will replace the Lance system and, while the exact nature of the equipment is yet to be determined, it will likely be a MLRS type system. The mission, methods and doctrine however, will be that of Lance and MLRS combined. Opening the FOTL system is a natural follow-on to the other two systems and will serve to expand and maintain opportunities for women through the 21st century.

The precedent for change was set with the FSB and the opportunity to change must be seized now by the Field Artillery. The DCPC exception granted the FSB can and has served to open the door for further exceptions. The FSB provides support forward to Corps units on a transitory basis. It has no direct combat mission nor does it collocate with those units that do. How can the Army grant one exception to DCPC and not another when all the units meet the same criteria? It is time to change-now.

#### ENDNOTES

1. USAFAS Briefing to ASA, M&RA, Mar 89.
2. TRADOC Briefing to CSA, Nov 89.
3. ASA, M&RA Briefing, Nov 89.
4. Ibid.



## CONCLUSIONS

Field Artillery branch was partially opened to women in 1977. Since that time, the development of DCPC, the INF treaty, Lance compression and elimination and other DOD policies have severely restricted career opportunities for women.

Currently operating under an agreement between the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel to leave the branch open to women and not expand, preserves the status quo, and leaves women presently serving in the branch extremely limited opportunities for advancement. The solutions to the present and to the future are at hand. Granting an exception to DCPC for the Lance firing batteries, MLRS and the FOTL opens numerous positions to women and allows equal opportunities for advancement with the men of the branch. It also preserves the future by sending a signal to the Army that the Field Artillery and the Army is progressive, innovative and dynamic.

The rationale is sound and the exception is justifiable in light of the previous FSB decision. The women of the Field Artillery deserve the best that we can offer them; clearly we are not giving it to them now. It is time to act and to act decisively. It is time to formally recognize reality of women in Field Artillery today.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the information presented in the previous chapters, I recommend that the Army:

- open Lance firing batteries to women.
- open the Multiple Launch Rocket System to women.
- once the Follow-on-to-Lance weapons system is defined, consider opening it to women, if applicable.
- adjust accessions to meet expanded opportunities.
- publish a Direct Combat Probability Coding regulation to clarify policy.
- direct a reexamination of DCPC and the risk rule in view of world trends and future conflict probabilities.

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13. "Women in the Field Artillery." ASA, M&RA Briefing, Nov 89.